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receiving. We neither passively assimilate nor arbitrarily construe, but by following and apprehending the inner movement of the history of philosophy we are qualified to enter into it, and become a part of it. If there is any truth in the assertion that the history of philosophy is a genuine development, then to comprehend this is an indispensable part of philosophy itself. If, on the other hand, history presents no real development, it would seem that the opponents of philosophy are right in their belief that the history of philosophical opinions has demonstrated the impossibility of philosophy as a subject of rational human investigation. For what hope is there in individual effort if the thought of the race has proved totally incompetent to its task? And what possibility is there of cooperation, if the past has given us no platform on which to stand?

There is, of course, nothing new to philosophical readers in the views which I have here attempted to express. But they seem to be of interest in relation to the question of a philosophical platform, which was brought forward at Baltimore. They also seem to me important and worthy of consideration in view of the evident lessening of interest in historical studies among American philosophers at the present time. If it is true that some agreement as to the aims and method of philosophy is essential both to the progress of philosophy itself and to the influence and position of the subject among the other sciences, and if, further, this agreement can be attained only by arriving at an understanding of the meaning of philosophy as it is exhibited in its historical development, can we afford to neglect historical studies or to regard them as of secondary importance? For the continuity of our thought with the past is at the same time our bond of union and basis of objectivity, and, as such, it, therefore, is the only thing that insures the reality of philosophy at the present time or that furnishes a guarantee for its future.

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THE TIME PARADOX IN PERCEPTION

THAT the object of perception is temporally present, that its temporal status is strictly *now*, seems obviously given in the fact of perception itself. The neighboring house which I see through my window apparently presents itself to me at the very instant of vision. Perceptive experience seems to require by its very nature that subject and object (whatever facts are indicated by these terms) shall be precisely simultaneous. If, however, we regard the matter after the fashion of naïve realism, and hold that a mental

process called perception knows a real object called a house, and that both perceptive process and house are included in the real time order of nature, we soon find a serious difficulty in our view. Professor Strong puts it thus: "The time needed for light rays to pass from the object to the eye and call forth the organic process to which perception corresponds has this result, that we perceive a slightly earlier state of the object than that which coexists with the perception." An extreme illustration is found in star vision, for "the starlight I see left the star years and years ago."¹ This tardiness of the perceptive state belongs universally to all perception of physical nature; the few thousandths of a second occupied by a nerve process in tactual perception are logically quite as significant as the thousands of years of light-transit in the case of a remote star. In any instance, whereas the object seems temporally present, reflection tells us that it is really past. The logical difficulty, in Professor McGilvary's words, is this: "The star that I see, therefore, must exist in the same state at two different times many years apart, if the star I see is the same as the real star in the order of nature."² This suggestion of inconsistency may appropriately be called the temporal paradox in perception.³

The importance of this fact for epistemology is considerable. If the inconsistency is genuine, it constitutes a final objection to an essential thesis of naïve realism, namely, that consciousness directly knows the real physical world as it is. And this, indeed, is precisely the use which Professor Strong makes of it. He says: "But the demonstrative proof that the object is other than the sensible appearance, is what may be called the *lateness* of perception. The sensible appearance is necessarily synchronous with the perceptive state, whereas the object (*i. e.*, that phase of it which is perceived) belongs to an earlier moment. Thus a star which we see in the sky may have ceased to exist ages and ages ago: a sufficient proof, surely, that what we now see (I mean the visual phenomenon—not that which the visual phenomenon reveals) is not the object itself." This conclusion applies, of course, to every bit of the physical world. It virtually tells us that we directly and immediately perceive only phenomena, that the real facts of the natural order are never immediately revealed in perception. Such information is so foreign to our naïve beliefs that we need a close examination of its premises.

The nub of the difficulty is contained in the assertion: "The

¹ This JOURNAL, Vol. I., p. 521.

² This JOURNAL, Vol. IV., p. 596.

³ Professor McGilvary analyzes the problem and explains that, with proper qualification of statement, no genuine contradiction remains, but his discussion does not seem to convince Professor Strong, who restates the point in the James *Festschrift*, as quoted below.

sensible appearance is necessarily synchronous with the perceptive state, whereas the object . . . belongs to an earlier moment." The obvious ambiguity of the term "sensible appearance" here is troublesome. It does not mean identically "the perceptive state," for that would be simple tautology; nor does it mean "the real object," for Professor Strong explicitly distinguishes between the two. Does it mean the cognitive relation, separated abstractly from the (likewise abstracted) perceptive state? Apparently not, for it is referred to as "what we now see." It seems to indicate an *apparent object* not identical with the real object, or with the perceptive state, or with the relation between the two; and to say that this apparent object, whatever it may be, is of necessity strictly present in a *temporal* sense—that it is here right *now*. And it is the discrepancy between this implied presentness of the apparent object and the real pastness of the real object that constitutes the difficulty which, as Professor Strong sees it, prevents us from identifying the real object with the apparent object.

Now one might object, on empirical grounds, to the interposition into the perceptive process of such an apparent object which is not externally real, nor purely subjective, nor yet, strictly speaking, relational. But since the alleged discrepancy is between two time characters, present and past, let us go directly to the heart of the matter by asking, Does perception imply the temporally present existence of its apparent object? Introspect perception and see whether it involves objectively the feature of strict temporal presentness; or, indeed, whether it locates its object temporally at all. Some careful discrimination is needful here. What the writer seems to find in perception is a *presence* rather than a *presentness*; the object is pragmatically present-to-me, but is not perceived as occupying the strictly present moment in the time order of nature. This pragmatic presence has all the usefulness of temporal presentness (except in extraordinary cases), but the two are not obviously identical. The testimony of introspection is at least ambiguous, and there is ground for believing that we pass to the temporal judgment by an inferential process which is not logically implicit in the perception itself.

Perhaps, however, this empirical suggestion is misdirected, for what Professor Strong says is that the sensible appearance is "necessarily" synchronous with the perceptive state. Against this one may justly press a persistent *Why?* Unless we identify the terms "sensible appearance" and "perceptive state" in a tautology which is certainly not Professor Strong's meaning, it seems at least possible that we perceive the object *as it was*. Why, pray, would perception be any the less perception if we acknowledged that it is a relation

to the past? Only because of the very assumption which is here in question, namely, that the *presence* of the object is equivalent to its temporal *presentness*. To many, doubtless, it will seem that if the object is really past, all we now perceive is our mental image or phenomenon. But this, again, is an uncritical supposition rather than an observed fact or a logical necessity. From any point of view the "sensible appearance," or object-as-perceived, if it is not identical with the psychical state, may be really past. Provided the regular physical and physiological processes take place, *e. g.*, atmospheric waves, stimulation of end-organs, etc., we genuinely perceive the real object even though the past has swallowed it.

Upon this view the question whether the object now exists at the very instant of perception can be settled only pragmatically. In the fraction of a second occupied by a nerve current as well as in years of light-transit the object *may* have ceased to be. But this account of perception in no way changes the pragmatic presence of the perceived object. Only in cases where more precise temporal definition is needed would we correct the perception by reference to a mathematically exact "now." To some extent we are learning to do this with sound.⁴ An interesting illustration, also, is furnished by observation of stars through a meridian telescope. The great difficulty of telling just when the star crosses the thread shows how uncertain is the simultaneity of sensible appearance and perceptive state, unless we identify the two *a priori*. In general, facts of change and motion are genuinely present-to-us in perception without being necessarily synchronous with the latter regarded abstractly as a mental state. Accordingly, if we understand the conditions of the problem sufficiently to escape being deceived by the "presence" of

⁴ Professor Strong points to this fact as accepted confirmation of the distinction between sensible appearance and real object. He says: "We are habituated to the notion that a sound, for instance that of a distant whistle, is heard at a later moment than that at which its objective cause occurs—indeed, we see the escape of steam several instants before we hear the sound: we should apply the same analogy to vision. In both cases the perceptive experience can not be the object itself, but at most the object as perceived; it can not be the object *sensu stricto*, but only the content." ("Essays Philosophical and Psychological, in Honor of William James," p. 174.) Against this I would say: (1) as above, that the auditory experience does not as such locate the objective sound-as-perceived in the present, or temporally at all. Any temporal feature is extraneous to the perception as occurring. In the latter we simply *hear*. (2) It is not the mental "content" that we hear; the content is itself the hearing. Any psychological statement which divides consciousness into content and awareness, mutually exclusive, seems to me fallacious *ab initio*. "Content" and "auditory awareness" are two names for the same fact; the former refers to descriptive structure, the latter to function. (3) If we tenaciously hold to the point that it is the *hearing*, not an objective-content-heard, which is *now*, the time discrepancy vanishes.

all perceived objects, we see ground for a reasonable debate whether the alleged contradiction between present and past, as affecting the naïvely realistic "object," is genuine. The crux of the matter is the question as to the temporal location of the "sensible appearance" or "object-as-perceived." Since large philosophical differences turn upon this point, it deserves painstaking analysis and exact statement.

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DISCUSSION

HUMANISM AND FREEDOM

IN Dr. Schiller's "Studies in Humanism" is an interesting discussion of "Freedom," in which the author proposes a reconciliation of determinism and indeterminism. In the present paper, I wish to consider the nature and value of this reconciliation.

The problem arises, Dr. Schiller tells us, from the conflict between two great postulates—the scientific postulate of determinism and the ethical postulate of freedom. "The first demands that all events shall be conceived as fully determined by their antecedents, in order that they may be certainly calculable once these are known; the second demands that our actions shall be so conceived that the fulfillment of duty is possible in spite of all temptations, in order that man shall be responsible and an agent in the full sense of the term."¹ Now freedom, in the sense in which it is required by the ethical postulate, involves real alternatives. In order that it shall be possible, the universe must be really evolving, and the course of its evolution must be, in some degree, indeterminate. There must be moments, in the experience of every one of us, when either one of two opposed courses of action is really and completely possible.

To reconcile this conception of real alternatives with the postulate of determinism is Dr. Schiller's problem. Now all that determinism, as methodological postulate, requires of reality is a sufficient degree of calculability to make it worth while for us to continue to calculate the course of events. A conception of freedom which "allowed us to calculate the 'free' event" would, then, "be scientifically quite permissible." On the other hand, the moralist, with his demand for freedom, "has no direct objection to the calculableness of moral acts. . . . He would have as much reason as the determinist to deplore the interruption into moral conduct of acts of freedom, if they had to be conceived as destructive of the continuity of moral character: he

¹ "Studies in Humanism," 1907, p. 394.